

CERCOSPORA LEAF SPOT OF AZALEA

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Azaleas, *Rhododendron* spp., are popular for their profuse and beautiful blooms during January to April. Flower colors used in Florida are red, white, purple, and variegated. In landscaping, azaleas are used as foundation, bedding, or background plants (1).

Leaf spot, caused by *Cercospora handelii* Bubak, is a common and serious disease of azaleas. It is reported from Belgium, Czechoslovakia, southern Russia, Japan (2), and New Zealand (3), as well as from most of the United States (2).

SYMPTOMS. Circular to irregular dark brown leaf spots occur on both sides of the leaves, varying in size from 3-20 mm (fig. 1). The spots may coalesce, especially on the margins, and petioles are also infected occasionally. Under moist conditions the fungus sporulates and greenish brown spores can be seen on the spots (3). When the disease is severe, chlorosis of the foliage and defoliation occur.

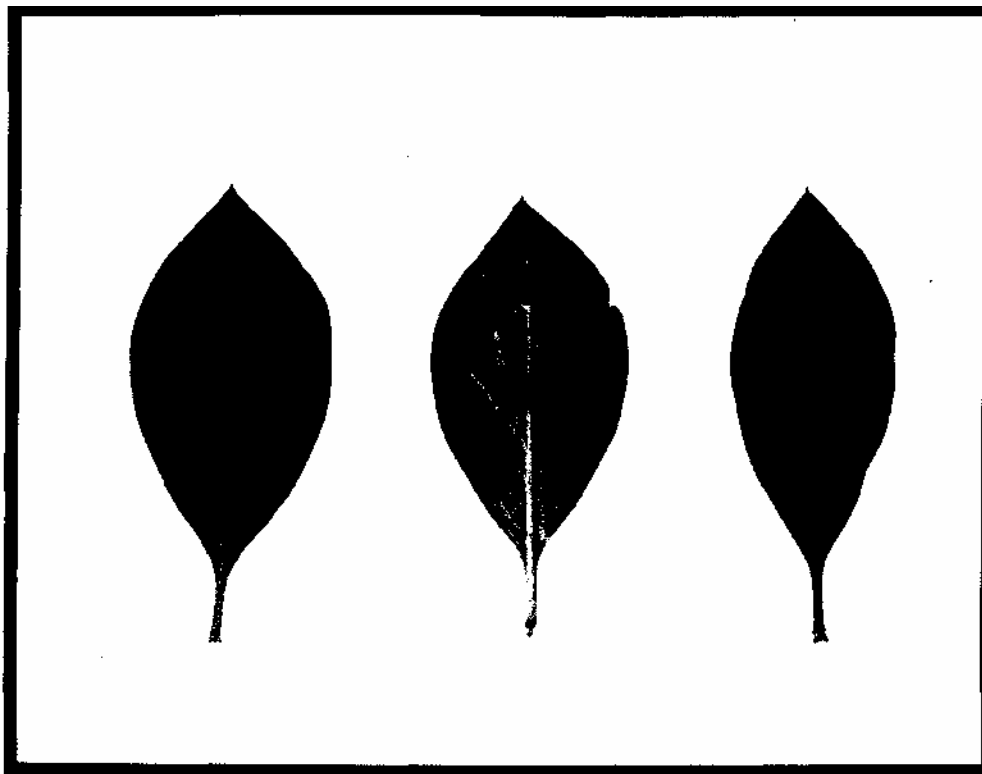


Fig. 1. *Cercospora handelii* on *Rhododendron* sp. showing circular to irregular brown leaf spots.

CONTROL. Regular applications of fungicides such as Dithane M-45 or Daconil at 1 ½ lbs/100 gal water or Benlate at ½ lbs/100 gal water are suggested for control.

Literature Cited

1. Bush, C. S. 1969. Flowers, shrubs, and trees for Florida homes. Fla. Dept. Agr. and Consumer Serv. Bull. 195. 179 p.
2. Chupp, C. 1953. A monograph of the fungus genus *Cercospora*. Ithaca, New York. 667 p.
3. McArthur, G. W. F. M. 1959. *Cercospora* leaf spot on *Rhododendron* (*C. handelii* Bubak). N. Z. J. Agr. Res. 2(1):86-89. (Rev. Appl. Mycol. 38:410-411)